

PROGRESSIVE GROWTH ACTIONS SUPPORT COMPANY'S
FUTURE

ABOUT PEERLESS PRECISION INC. Peerless Precision, Inc. (PPI) manufactures precision machined parts for the aerospace, defense, and medical device industries. The 20-person, family-owned job shop is based in Westfield, Massachusetts, and is certified under both the AS9100 and ISO9001 quality management standards.

THE CHALLENGE. When PPI owner Larry Maier retired, his daughter Kristin Carlson stepped in as president. As someone who had worked for the company on and off since she was 15, Carlson had to overcome the perception that she was just a colleague, or "Larry's daughter." Her first mission was to ease fears that she would sell the company. She made it clear that she had no interest in layoffs or selling the company her father had worked so hard to build. Instead, she planned to implement Lean Manufacturing to improve operations and increase sales.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. While conducting her research on Lean practitioners, Carlson kept hearing that she needed to speak with MassMEP, part of the MEP National Network™. Every person at the company, including Carlson, participated in a Principles of Lean Management training conducted by MassMEP. They began moving away from an attitude of "we have always done it that way," to creating new solutions. During this time, Carlson was transitioning into the president's role. One of her mentors advised her to "watch the books - watch the guys," and she wisely began to manage by the numbers. The company formed a senior management team and implemented management controls. MassMEP also conducted several Value Stream Mapping training sessions that outlined implementing a pull and kanban system. PPI created a kanban system for bins on the shop floor, as well as a push/pull system for the twin spindle lathe process. The improvements increased production, and PPI added jobs to keep up with the growth.

Next, MassMEP leveraged a grant to provide Technology-Driven Market Intelligence (TDMI) for PPI. TDMI identifies the benefits and market impacts related to a company's technology-based asset, providing customized actionable intelligence to help the company expand. PPI used TDMI to identify mega-trends in medical devices, aerospace, robotics, energy, and sensors. The project also helped Carlson to define precision as it relates to PPI's services. More than keeping tolerance, the value of precision is PPI's ability to provide it consistently over time. This insight provided a clearer direction for the future of PPI and the value-add it can bring to its customers. The company began engineering its own prints, carving out a niche market of delivery that saves time in rework and produces a quicker return.

"MassMEP helped me to determine the best direction for the company, and connections to outside sources, so that we can grow and be here for future generations."

-Kristin Carlson, President

RESULTS



Improved communication, implemented management team on shop floor



Added **3** new full-time employees, plus a co-op student



Increased sales by **\$700,000** in one year



Identified mega-trends, created new market for delivery

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